

Conservation Courier Newsletter



Volume 23, Issue 1

February 2009

Ag Appreciation Night Slated

Come join us Thursday night, February 19, 2009 at the Oak Grove Civic Center for an evening of ag information, awards, conservation conversation, and good food as we celebrate farming in Jackson County! The event will recognize the positive impact of soil and water stewardship on agriculture.

Program highlights for this second annual event of its kind in our district include:

- ◆ Climate trends and ag weather resources
- ◆ The dirt on soil testing
- ◆ Conservation farmer of the year award
- ◆ Conservation photo contest awards
- ◆ Educational displays and information
- ◆ Dinner

Ag Appreciation Night is scheduled for the Civic Center at 2100 South Broadway in Oak Grove beginning at 6:00 p.m. Admission is free although an RSVP is required by February 13, 2009 as seating may be limited. E-mail linda.struwe@swcd.mo.gov for your reservation or call 816-228-1836, extension 3, for a reservation and directions if necessary.

Soil and water conservation practices like no-till, terraces, waterways, ponds, etc. have added measurably to the conservation and wise use of soil and water resources in Jackson County. *Ag Appreciation Night* is designed to recognize the efforts of farm owners and operators who have installed and maintained these practices on the land.



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District Clerk Linda Struwe Honored



Linda Struwe, Missouri Conservation District Clerk of the Year award winner.

Linda Struwe was honored late last year as the state *Conservation District Clerk of the Year*. The award, in the form of an engraved plaque, was presented at a state conference for conservation district employees and officials near Osage Beach, Missouri.

Linda has been the district clerk for the Jackson County Soil and Water Conservation District since 2002. She was honored for her exceptional management of the district's conservation cost-share and accounting programs. Linda is always willing to take on special projects, new responsibilities, and challenges in the interest of furthering conservation efforts within the district.

Linda and husband Calvin farm near Oak Grove and have two adult children and two grandchildren.

The conference at which Linda received the award was sponsored by the Missouri Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts, the Missouri Soil and Water Conservation District Employees Association, and their conservation partners. The annual event brings district officials and employees together to focus on training needs and to recognize outstanding conservationists.

Erosion and Sediment Control Training Planned



Cutting-edge training on erosion and sediment control for urban areas is planned for contractors, developers, builders, and others on Wednesday, February 11, 2009. The half-day event, entitled the *Protecting Urban Soil and Water Workshop*, will be conducted in the *Conservation Room* of the Bass Pro Shops Independence location beginning at 8:00 am.

The workshop will provide an overview of urban erosion and provide real-life erosion control solutions from project planning through construction and maintenance. Inspections, permitting, and regulatory requirements of the *National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System, Phase II*, will be a major focus. Current topics like *low-impact development* also will be highlighted.

Each participant will receive a copy of a *Protecting Urban Soil and Water Resource CD* with presentation notes and useful technical information on sediment and erosion control. A certificate for 3.5 hours of continuing education credit will be offered to participants.

The workshop is sponsored by the Jackson County Soil and Water Conservation District, Jackson County Public Works, and the Mid-America Association of Conservation Districts. Workshop presenters will include staff from Patti Banks Associates, the Environmental Protection Agency, and Missouri Department of Natural Resources.

A registration fee of \$20.00 per participant will be charged to help cover workshop costs including handout materials and a continental breakfast. For more information and a registration form, call 816-228-1836, extension 3, or e-mail bill.bohnert@swcd.mo.gov.

Soil Focus of Stewardship Week

As the underpinning of our environment, soil is one of the most important natural resources on Earth. It is the focus of *Soil and Water Stewardship Week*, designated April 26 through May 3, 2009 to emphasize that conservation and wise use of soil are vital to all life on Earth. Soil is literally the foundation for our agricultural food supply, buildings, roads, lawns and gardens, wildlife habitat, and much more. The theme chosen for the Stewardship Week celebration of soil is *Dig it—the Secrets of Soil*.



Contrary to the popular adage *dull as dirt*, soil is a very complex, dynamic, and intriguing natural resource. It has been lauded and written of often throughout history by those who realize its practical and spiritual value. Here are a few quotes that characterize the significance of soil:

Heaven is under our feet as well as over our heads. Henry David Thoreau

The farther we get away from the land, the greater our insecurity. Henry Ford

To forget how to dig the earth and to tend the soil is to forget ourselves. Mahatma Gandhi

A nation that destroys its soils destroys itself. Franklin D. Roosevelt

Speak to the earth, and it shall teach thee. Job 12:8

All that we did, all that we said or sang must come from contact with the soil. William Butler Yeats

We are part of the earth and it is part of us. What befalls the earth befalls all the sons of the earth. Chief Seattle

To be a successful farmer, one must first know the nature of the soil. Xenophon

We might say that the earth has the spirit of growth; that its flesh is the soil. Leonardo Da Vinci

While the farmer holds the title to the land, actually it belongs to all the people because civilization itself rests upon the soil. Thomas Jefferson

The soil is the great connector of our lives, the source and destination of all. Wendell Berry

We know more about the movement of celestial bodies than about the soil underfoot. Leonardo Da Vinci

For all things come from earth, and all things end by becoming earth. Xenophanes

There can be no life without soil and no soil without life; they have evolved together. Charles E. Kellogg

Gardeners know all the dirt. Unknown

Watershed Hydrology Workshop Offered



A training workshop focusing on the WinTR-55 small watershed hydrologic model will be conducted Wednesday, March 11, 2009 at the Independence campus of the Blue River Community College. The event is designed for engineers, technicians, planners, and government officials.

The PC based WinTR-55 software, now in a Windows format, offers simplified procedures for calculating storm runoff volume, peak rate of discharge, hydrographs, and storm volumes required for floodwater reservoirs. The procedures are applicable in small watersheds, especially those undergoing urbanization.

Workshop participants will be able to explore WinTR-55 on personal computers in the classroom and each will receive a copy of the *WinTR-55 Workshop Toolkit CD* with software plus exercises and training materials. The training, which begins at 8:00 a.m., provides seven hours of continuing education credit.

The workshop is sponsored by the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Jackson County Soil and Water Conservation District, and the Mid-America Association of Conservation Districts. It will provide hands-on training by NRCS engineering and technical staff. Technical Release Number 55 (TR-55) was first issued by the Soil Conservation Service, predecessor to NRCS, in 1975 as a manual method of making watershed hydrology calculations. The model was enhanced in 1986 and programming was developed for MS DOS PC computer application. The MS Windows version, WinTR-55, was made available in 2004 after extensive testing and field use.

A registration fee of \$55.00 per participant will be charged to help cover workshop costs. For more information and a registration form, call 816-228-1836, extension 3, or e-mail bill.bohnert@swcd.mo.gov.



Thank You Jackson County Legislature!



Sincere appreciation is expressed to the **Jackson County Legislature** for assistance in funding Jackson County Soil and Water Conservation District technical and information/education programs. With the Legislature's help, valuable programs are conducted which protect the natural resources of the County and further the missions of the County and our district. Several specific programs include:

- ◆ Technical and State cost-share assistance to secure conservation practices on the land, protecting County soil and water resources and infrastructure
- ◆ Natural resource education classes for *X-Stream Green* and *Jacomo Day Camp* programs at the Kemper Outdoor Education Center
- ◆ Sediment and erosion control and watershed hydrology training workshops
- ◆ Technical assistance with natural resource expertise for the Jackson County Master Plan Steering Committee

Thank You Bayer CropScience!

A special thank you is due to **Bayer CropScience** for sponsorship of three district environmental education programs in Jackson County. Specific programs include:

- ◆ *Kansas City Region Envirothon* for high school youth
- ◆ *Conservation Poster Contest* for elementary schools
- ◆ Soil profile building educational activity for youth and adults



Bayer CropScience is one of the world's leading innovative crop science companies in the areas of crop protection, non-agricultural pest control, seeds, and plant biotechnology. They offer a wide range of products and service backup for modern, sustainable agriculture as well as for non-agricultural applications. Bayer CropScience has a global workforce of about 17,800 and is represented in more than 120 countries.

Crop Management Strategy Session



Crop producers should reserve Friday, February 20, 2009 for a regional conference that will help them cope with the current volatility in commodity prices and input costs. University of Missouri Extension specialists with expertise in economics, crop production, soil fertility and plant nutrient, pest management, and weather forecasting will present the newest research and outline strategies growers can use in 2009. Information will be presented that can help producers reduce risks, increase production, improve fertilizer efficiency, and protect crop yields.

Growers will benefit from discussions on topics including:

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| ◆ Fertilizer industry and pricing | ◆ Effect of plant population on corn and soybean yield |
| ◆ N, P, and K management | ◆ Liberty Link and conventional soybean production |
| ◆ Foliar fungicide use | ◆ Impact of weather conditions on field crop diseases |
| ◆ Value of stacked traits for insect protection | ◆ Economics of variable rate fertilizer application |
| ◆ Protecting seeds from disease and insects | |

The all-day conference will be held at New Oak Vineyards located about six miles southeast of Wellington and will begin with registration at 8:00 a.m. The registration fee of \$20.00 includes all handouts, conference manual, refreshments, and a noon meal. For more conference and registration details, e-mail University of Missouri Extension Regional Agronomist Julie Abendroth at abendrothj@missouri.edu or call 816-776-6961. Registration is required by February 16, 2009.



District Conservation Education Opportunities

Conservation education is an important thrust of the Jackson County Soil and Water Conservation District. Opportunities abound for students and adults to gain knowledge and a greater appreciation of important natural resources like soil and water. For more information on the District educational opportunities listed below, e-mail bill.bohnert@swcd.mo.gov or call 816-228-1836, extension 3.

Envirothon: A problem solving, natural resources learning experience for 9th through 12th graders. Students are trained in real-life, hands-on environmentalism and then use what they have learned to solve environmental problems in a competitive framework. Subject areas include soils, forestry, aquatics, wildlife, and current environmental issues. Envirothon teams can compete on the state and national levels for substantial scholarships and prizes.



Conservation Education Resource Library: A collection of electronic and physical resources for grades K through 12 as well as adults. Nearly 60 videos, reference books, interactive software titles, demonstration kits, and teaching aids are available for loan free of charge. The library also includes a listing of links to soil and water resource educational information on the Internet.



Class Presentations: Presentations to students, in an indoor or outdoor classroom setting, designed to stress the importance of soil as a natural resource, explain soil physical properties, highlight soil conservation practices, and suggest soil and water stewardship activities for students. Presentations may be tailored to grade level, subject matter, and length of class period.

Conservation Photo Contest: A competition for youth and adults adding a special dimension to environmental studies within and outside the classroom. Digital or film photography may be used with photos submitted in several different conservation and environmental categories. Winners can receive prizes and recognition on county and national levels. Youth and adult entries are judged separately.

Conservation Poster Contest: An opportunity for third and fourth grade students to artistically express what they have learned about soil, water, and related resource conservation by creating a poster. Poster board and a participation ribbon are provided for each student plus three championship ribbons for each classroom and trophies for county winners.

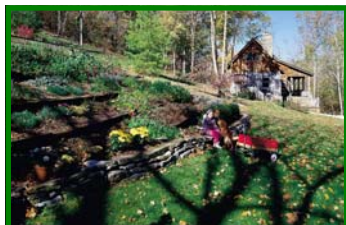
Writing For Nature Contest: A student essay contest designed to inspire research, creative expression, and advocacy for natural resource stewardship. Open to grades 7 through 12, the competition offers students an opportunity to compete for recognition and cash awards on the county level.



Fire Prairie Wetland: An outdoor classroom that offers students, teachers, and the general public a unique opportunity to experience wetland ecology in action. The site, located near Buckner, provides a home for hundreds of wildlife flora and fauna species that thrive in a freshwater marsh environment. Many enhancements like an amphitheater, nature trails, information kiosk, and sheltered study structure make it an ideal site for outdoor classes or just enjoying nature through bird watching, photography, hiking, etc.

Plan Now for Backyard Conservation

Did you know that actions you can take in your own backyard (and front yard too) can have a very positive effect on the environment? It's true--simple actions that can help beautify your property can also protect its valuable natural resources of soil, water, wildlife, and more. It's time to begin planning now for action next spring. Here are some suggestions that could help alleviate problems with soil erosion, pesticides and nutrients, yard waste, stormwater, and more that can result from poor conservation practices in your home grounds and gardens.



Soil Erosion: Keeping soil covered is the key to successfully reducing erosion on the home grounds and sedimentation down stream. Plant materials, such as grass, flowers, shrubs, and trees, provide a canopy over the soil as well as roots that bind the soil holding it in place. The use of mulch, like straw, compost, wood chips, pine straw, or even rock mulch, can protect bare soil from erosion and help retain moisture for plants during dry periods. Terracing and contour planting of vegetable gardens also helps to protect soil from erosion.



Yard Waste: Garden residue, grass clippings, leaves, and even small branches can be turned into compost. This valuable soil amendment can be used to add plant nutrients to the soil naturally as well as mulch for erosion control and moisture conservation. Compost also increases soil organic matter levels. A small, well-managed compost pile in the backyard is a great way to keep useable materials out of the waste stream while benefiting the home grounds and gardens.



Nutrient Management: Nutrients are essential for plant growth but if commercial fertilizers are over applied, both plants and the environment may be harmed. The analysis of a representative sample of soil collected from your garden or landscaping will serve as a good guide to judicious nutrient application. Use of natural nutrient sources, such as compost and legumes, saves the environment and your money. Information on soil sampling and testing is available at local university extension centers.



Stormwater: Impervious surfaces like roofs, driveways, patios, etc. can cause stormwater problems, even flooding. Backyard remedies like rain barrels and rain gardens can collect water from downspouts keeping it out of the stormwater stream. The ultimate in stormwater recycling could include a small pond or even an underground storage tank to collect excess water and make it available for watering lawns, flowers, or gardens. A small reservoir, pond, or wetland will provide wildlife habitat in addition to retaining stormwater.

Each year the Jackson County Soil and Water Conservation District sponsors a *Backyard of the Year* recognition program in an effort to encourage the use of simple conservation practices to beautify and protect home grounds and gardens. Adaptations of many conservation practices farmers have used for decades can help protect backyard soil and water resources. Planting trees, terracing, building a small pond or wetland, and mulching not only beautify your yard but can save soil, keep water clean, encourage wildlife, and more. For details on the *Backyard of the Year* contest, e-mail bill.bohnert@swcd.mo.gov or call 816-228-1836, extension 3.

With these backyard conservation practices in place, you're on your way to bountiful and beautiful gardens and home grounds with the added benefit of protecting nature at the same time.

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JACKSON COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

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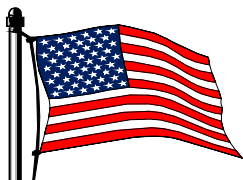
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The Conservation Courier Newsletter carries the message of natural resource conservation to rural and urban Jackson County. To receive a quarterly e-mail notice listing new topics, just e-mail bill.bohnert@swcd.mo.gov with your request.



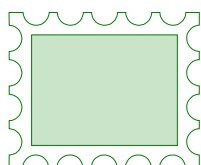
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**Conservation Districts
Conserving America**

_____ **To:**



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